

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of the claims is intended to replace all previous versions and/or listings of the claims in the present application:

Claims 1-19 (Cancelled)

Claim 20 (Newly Added) A household apparatus (1) comprising:

a first panel (2) pivotably connected to a second panel (3) by a hinge (4), the hinge (4) comprising at least one recess (6) formed in the first panel (2) and at least one hinge element (8) connected to the second panel (3), the at least one hinge element (8) rotatably mounted in the recess (6);

the at least one hinge element (8) capable of moving between a retracted position in which the at least one hinge element (8) cannot penetrate the recess (6) so as to enable the first and second panels (2,3) to be separated and a pivoting position in which the at least one hinge element (8) can penetrate the recess (6) so as to pivotably connect the first and second panels (2,3) when the first and second panels (2,3) are properly arranged with respect to one another; and

a control element (9) having a gripping member (30) for enabling the control element (9) to be manually moved between a releasing position and a locking position;

wherein the control element (9) cooperates with the at least one hinge element (8) so that when the control element (9) is in the locking position, the at least one hinge element (8) is in the retracted position and when the control element (9) is in the releasing position, the at least one hinge element (8) is in the pivoting position.

Claim 21 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 20 wherein the control element (9) is separable from the first and second panels (2,3), and wherein the separation of the control element (9) from the first and second panels (2,3) corresponds to the releasing position.

Claim 22 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 20 further comprising a spring (10) that urges the at least one hinge element (8) toward the retracted position.

Claim 23 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) of claim 20 wherein the control element (9) is slidably mountable to the second panel (3).

Claim 24 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) of claim 20 wherein the at least one hinge element (8) is borne by a rod (7) that is slidably mounted on the second panel (3) so as to be slidable in a direction of an axis (5) of the rod (7).

Claim 25 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 24 wherein the control element (9) includes a control surface (19) that drives the rod (7) along the direction of the axis (5) during the movement of the control element (9) between the releasing position and the locking position.

Claim 26 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 25 further comprising a connection element (22) movable on the second panel (3) between an inactive position and a connection position, the connection element (22) cooperating with the hinge (4) so as to establish an electrical connection with a complementary element on the second panel (3) only when the connection element (22) is in the connection position.

Claim 27 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 26 wherein the control element (9) comprises the connection element (22).

Claim 28 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 27 wherein the connection element (22) cooperates with the at least hinge element (8) so that the connection element (22) can be moved from the inactive position to the connection position only when the at least one hinge element (8) is located in the recess (6).

Claim 29 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 28 wherein the connection element (22) cooperates with the at least hinge element (8) so that if the hinge element (8) is located outside the recess (6), the connection element (22) is stopped in a blocking

position located between the inactive position and the connection position when the connection element (22) is moved from the inactive position toward the connection position.

Claim 30 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 29 wherein the at least one hinge element (8) is capable of moving from the retracted position to a contact position in which the at least one hinge element (8) engages the recess (6) of the first panel (2) and the first and second panels (2,3) are pivotably connected or to a deployed position in which the at least one hinge element (8) projects beyond the contact position if the at least one hinge element (8) does not engage the recess (6) and the first and second panels (2,3) are nor pivotably connected.

Claim 31 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 30 wherein the connection element (22) is capable of moving between the inactive position and a selection position located between the inactive position and the blocking position, the connection element (22) driving the at least one hinge element (8) from the retracted position to the contact position when the connection element (22) moves from the inactive position to the selection position.

Claim 32 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 31 wherein the connection element (22) comprises a selection member (23) that is capable of moving between a drive position and an activated position, the selection member (23) cooperating with the at least one hinge element (8) so that when the hinge element (8) is in the contact position and the first and second panels (2,3) are not pivotably connected, the selection member (23) stays in the drive position and drives the hinge element (8) to the deployed position while moving the connection element (22) to the blocked position, and when the hinge element (8) is in the contact position and in the recess (6), the hinge element (8) drives the selection member (23) from its drive position to the activated position while the connection element (22) moves from the selection position to the connection position.

Claim 33 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 32 wherein the connection element (22) comprises a spring (24) that urges the selection member (23) toward its drive position, the spring force of the spring (24) of the connection element (22) being greater

than that of a spring force of the spring (10) that urges the at least one hinge element (8) to the retracted position.

Claim 34 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 33 wherein the selection member (23) comprises a selection surface (25) that drives a bearing element (26) borne by the rod (7), the connection element (22) comprising a stop surface (27) that is aligned with the selection surface (25) when the selection member (23) is in the drive position, the stop surface (27) contacting the bearing element (26) of the rod (7) when the connection element (22) is in the blocked position, the connection element (22) further comprising a connection surface (28) that is aligned with the selection surface (25) when the selection member (23) is in the activated position, the connection surface 28 holding the hinge element (8) in the contact position, and wherein the bearing element (26) bypasses the stop surface (27) when it slides along the connection surface (28).

Claim 35 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 34 wherein the connection element (22) comprises the control surface (19), the control surface (19) aligned with the selection surface (25), the control surface (19) cooperating with the bearing element (26) so as to drive the rod (7) into the contact position when the connection element (22) moves from the inactive position to the selection position.

Claim 36 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 35 wherein the bearing element (26) is formed by a drive element (20) on an end of the rod (7).

Claim 37 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to one of 36 wherein one of the first and second panels (2, 3) includes a manual control member (31) that is capable of moving between a rest position and an ejection position, the manual control member (31) cooperating with the control element (9) so as to drive the control element (9) in the direction of the releasing position when the manual control member (31) is moved into its ejection position.

Claim 38 (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 37 wherein the manual control member (31) is a button (31) that is slidably mounted in the panel (2,3), the

manual control member (31) comprising an inclined surface (33) for slidably engaging a complementary inclined surface (34) of the control element (9).

Claim 39. (Newly Added) The household apparatus (1) according to claim 37 wherein the manual control member (31) is a lever (31) that is mounted to one of the panels (2,3) so as to pivot about a pivot pin (35), the manual control member (31) comprising a cam surface (36) for contacting and moving the control element (9) when the lever (31) pivots.